

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRASIL 04622 131528Z

ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

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INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM

SUBJ: REMARKS OF DOM CARMINE ROCCO, PAPAL NUNCIO, CONCERNING
HUMAN RIGHTS

1. SUMMARY. THE BETTER PART OF FORTY-FIVE MINUTE CONVERSATION DURING THE AMBASSADOR'S INITIAL CALL ON PAPAL NUNCIO, WHO IS ALSO DEAN OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS, WAS DEVOTED TO A DISCUSSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THE PAPAL NUNCIO'S NET ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN BRAZIL IS THAT GEISEL GOVERNMENT HAS MADE "ENORMOUS" PROGRESS IN PAST FIVE YEARS. HE CHARACTERIZED GEISEL AS HONES AND SINCERE PRESIDENT WHO FINDS ABUSE OF PRISONERS REPUGNANT AND HAS DONE EVERYTHINGPOSSIBLE TO CORRECT ABUSES BUT CANNOT ALWAYS CONTROL PERSONNEL DOWN THE LINE. NEVERTHELESS HE THOUGHT ABUSES WERE PRIMARILY BY LOCAL AND STATE POLICE AND NOT AT FEDERAL LEVEL. SUCH ABUSES AS OCCUR NOW HE CONSIDREED MORE RESULT OF LOW CULTURAL LEVEL OF POLICE RATHER THAN INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE. IN BROAD TERMS HE SAID HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM NOW WAS PRIMARILY ONE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ABUSES WERE NOT RESULT OF CONSCIOUS POLICY OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 BRASIL 04622 131528Z

2. THE DEAN CHARACTERIZED THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION OVERALL IN BRAZIL AS BEING "MUCH BETTER" THAN WHEN HE ARRIVED HERE FIVE YEARS AGO. HE FEELS THAT GEISEL IS AN HONEST AND SINCERE MAN, DEDICATED TO ACHIEVING IMPROVEMENT IN THIS SECTOR AND CONSIDERED GEISEL HAD MADE "ENORMOUS PROGRESS. HE LACKS FULL CONTROL OVER THE POLICE AT STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS, AND THIS IS WHERE THE ABUSES ARISE. HE IS ABLE TO REPLACE THE ODD VIOLATOR, AS IN THE

CASE OF THE 2D ARMY COMMANDER, BUT HE IS UNABLE TO CONTROL EVERYONE ALL THE WAY DOWN THE LINE. ABUSES DO OCCUR, ESPECIALLY IN THE CASE OF ORDINARY PRISONERS, BUT THE PRACTICES IS NOT INSTITUTIONALIZED NOR DOES IT INVOLVE "SCIENTIFIC" TORTURE.

3. THE ABUSES THAT DO OCCUR, HE SAID, WERE MORE A RESULT OF THE LOW LEVEL OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF POLICE. HE RECALLED CASE OF MURDER OF PRIEST WAS TRYING TO DEFEND WOMAN BEING MISTREATED BY POLICE. THE POLICEMAN DREW HIS AND KILLED THE PRIEST. HE ALLUDED TO THE PROBLEM OF THE DAVISES, AMERICANS RANCHING IN NORTHERN BRAZIL, AND SAID THAT THE SITUATION IN THE AREA WAS NOT UNLIKE THE EARLY WEST IN WHICH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S CONTROL WAS LIMITED AND NOT ALWAYS PRESENT WHEN NEEDED. BUT HE CREDITED THE GOVERNMENT WITH MAKING CONSIDERABLE STRIDES IN RAISING THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LEVELS IN THE COUNTRY. IT IS A PROBLEM OF GENERATIONS, HE SAID.

4. THE DEAN SAID THAT THE ABUSES THAT OCCUR USUALLY OCCUR IN THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF AN ARREST. HE SAID THAT CARDINAL SALES OF RIO VISITS THE PRISONERS TO OBSERVE THE SITUATION. HE ALMOST NEVER HEARS COMPLAIN DURING THESE VISITS AND THEREFORE DOES NOT CONSIDER THE PRISON SYSTEM AS SUCH A SOURCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE.

5. THE PRINCIPAL FACTOR IN CONTINUING HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS, THE DEAN FEELS, IS THE EXTREME SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 BRASIL 04622 131528Z

BACKWARDNESS OF A MAJOR PART OF THIS HUGE COUNTRY. CIVILIZATION IS GRADUALLY MOVING NORTHWARD FROM THE SOUTH, BUT IT WILL TAKE GENERATIONS TO TRANSFORM THE PRESENT DESPERATE POVERTY AND BACKWARDNESS.

6. THE NUNCIO EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND CONTRIBUTE TO SLOW PROGRESS. HE MENTIONED LAND MANAGEMENT AS A KEY PROBLEM IN THE NORTH. SOME LAND PROBLEMS CAN INVOLVE A DIFFICULT CHOICE BETWEEN LEAVING A SMALL FARMER ON THE LAND AND TURNING IT OVER TO A FIRM WHICH HAS THE CAPITAL AND RESOURCES TO DEVELOP IT EFFICIENTLY. IN SUCH CASES, THE DEAN SAID, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALLOW THE EMPRESA TO TAKE THE LAND BUT RESETTLE THE FORMER OCCUPANT ON LAND ELSEWHERE.

7. THE DEAN'S ADVICE TO THE U.S. WAS TO BE EXTREMELY DISCREET AND CAREFUL IN ANY EFFORTS TO PROMOTE THE POSITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IMPROVEMENT IN BRAZIL, AT LEAST UNDER THE PRESENT BRAZILIAN ADMINISTRATION. THE SUBJECT IS EXTREMELY DELICATE AND SENSITIVE FOR THE GOB. THE CHURCH ITSELF SEEKS TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS IN LOCALITIES WHERE THEY ARE BEING VIOLATED BUT SEEKS TO DO SO QUIETLY AND WITHOUT PUBLICITY, AVOIDING CONFRONTATIONS WITH

THE GOB. THE NUNCIO, SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS ESPECIALLY
SENSITIVE NOW BECAUSE IT WAS AN ELECTION PERIOD. HE WELCOMED
THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS AND HOPED THAT
WE WOULD CONTINUE TO CONSULT. THE AMBASSADOR ASSURED HIM THAT
WE WOULD.
SAYRE

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